

Medefaidrin

Medefaidrin (Medefidrin), or *Oḅeri Ɔkaimɛ*, is an artificial language and script created as a Christian sacred language by an Ibibio congregation in 1930s Nigeria. It has its roots in glossolalia ('speaking in tongues').

Speakers consider Medefaidrin to be a 'spirit language'. It was created by two leaders of the church, Michael Ukpong and Akpan Akpan Udofia. They report that the Holy Spirit revealed the words of the language to Ukpong, while Udofia wrote them down. At the time Ibibio was not a written language, and Udofia created a script to write Medefaidrin.

After finalizing the language in 1936, members of the church started a school in which children were instructed in Medefaidrin. This was not tolerated by the British colonial government, who closed the school that same year. Nonetheless, the language continued to be used for church activities, including liturgy and hymns, and for letters and written contracts between members. The language faded from use, but in 1986 Udofia began teaching it again in the church's Sunday school in Ididep. Old manuscripts in the script are in poor condition, and in the 21st century there has been some effort to preserve them.

In structure, the language is largely a relexification of English, though the semantics are closer to the native language of its users, Ibibio. Medefaidrin is a stress-accented rather than tonal language, though this may be changing under Ibibio influence. There are several consonant clusters that do not exist in English. (Ibibio has no consonant clusters.) The definite article is *dei*, and several prepositions alliterate or rhyme with their English equivalents: *su* "to", *fra* "from", *nai* "by", *kin* "in". Most words, however, resemble nothing in English or Ibibio, but appear to have been created without a specific underlying system. The morphology is not highly developed, but a few elements have been taken from English, such as the plural in -s (z?). The vigesimal numbering system, however, and the calendar, reflect Ibibio norms. The calendar year contains sixteen four-week months.^[2]

The script has upper- and lower-case letters like the English alphabet,^[3] but the letters were invented and there is no systematic relationship between glyph and sound. There are a number of arbitrary digraphs, whose pronunciation cannot be determined from their component letters, again as in English.

Medefaidrin	
𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆 𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊 / <i>Oḅeri Ɔkaimɛ</i>	
Created by	adherents of the <i>Oḅeri Ɔkaimɛ</i> church
Date	1930s
Setting and usage	Ibibiland, Nigeria
Purpose	constructed language <ul style="list-style-type: none">liturgical languageglossolaliaMedefaidrin
Writing system	Oḅeri Ɔkaimɛ script
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	dmf
Glottolog	mede1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/mede1238) ^[4]

Medefaidrin script	
Type	Alphabet
Languages	Medefaidrin
Time period	1930s to present
Direction	Left-to-right
ISO 15924	Medf, 265
Unicode alias	Medefaidrin
Unicode range	U+16E40–U+16E9F (https://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U16E40.pdf)

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Unicode

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Medefaidrin script was added to the Unicode Standard in June, 2018 with the release of version 11.0.

The Unicode block for Medefaidrin is U+16E40–U+16E9F and contains 91 characters:^[4]

<div>Medefaidrin^{[1][2]}</div> <div>Official Unicode Consortium code chart (https://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U16E40.pdf) (PDF)</div>																
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
U+16E4x	𐌀	𐌁	𐌂	𐌃	𐌄	𐌅	𐌆	𐌇	𐌈	𐌉	𐌐	𐌑	𐌒	𐌓	𐌔	𐌕
U+16E5x	𐌖	𐌗	𐌘	𐌙	𐌚	𐌛	𐌜	𐌝	𐌞	𐌟	𐌠	𐌡	𐌢	𐌣	𐌤	𐌥
U+16E6x	𐌦	𐌧	𐌨	𐌩	𐌪	𐌫	𐌬	𐌭	𐌮	𐌯	𐌰	𐌱	𐌲	𐌳	𐌴	𐌵
U+16E7x	𐌶	𐌷	𐌸	𐌹	𐌺	𐌻	𐌼	𐌽	𐌾	𐌿	𐍀	𐍁	𐍂	𐍃	𐍄	𐍅
U+16E8x	𐍆	𐍇	𐍈	𐍉	𐍊	𐍋	𐍌	𐍍	𐍎	𐍏	𐍐	𐍑	𐍒	𐍓	𐍔	𐍕
U+16E9x	𐍖	𐍗	𐍘	𐍙	𐍚	𐍛	𐍜	𐍝	𐍞	𐍟	𐍠					
<div>Notes</div> <div> <div>1.^ As of Unicode version 13.0</div> <div>2.^ Grey areas indicate non-assigned code points</div> </div>																

See also

- the 20th-century Eskayan language and script of the Philippines
- the embryonic 12th-century Lingua Ignota and script of Germany

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- Eno-Abasi Urua (2008), *Medefidrin, the 'Spirit' language of the 1920s in Ibibio land*

References

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 2. The week is reported to consist of eight days, but it is not clear if it is 8 by Ibibio or English counting. What is 2 days from now in English is 3 days from now in Ibibio (with today counted as the first day), so starting a new week every 8 days when thinking in Ibibio means every 7 days when thinking in English.
 3. Rovenchak, Andrij; Gibbon, Dafydd; Ekpenyong, Moses; Urua, Eno-Abasi (2016-04-18). "L2/16-101R: Proposal for encoding the Medefaidrin (Oberi Okaime) script in the SMP of the UCS" (<https://www.unicode.org/L2/L2016/16101r-medefaidrin.pdf>) (PDF). ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2.
 4. "Unicode 11.0.0" (<https://www.unicode.org/versions/Unicode11.0.0/>). Unicode Consortium. June 5, 2018. Retrieved June 5, 2018.
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